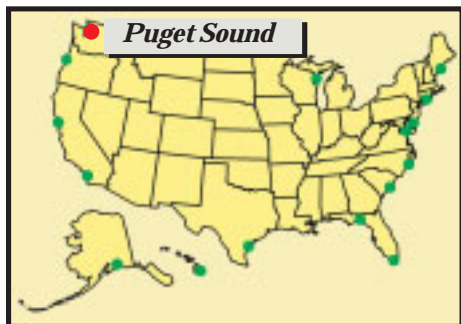




U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Coastal Program

Success in Puget Sound



Caring for Our Coastal Habitats



Golden Paintbrush.

Photo by Jon Gilstrom

Conserving Coastal Resources

Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the Puget Sound Coastal Program in 1991, effective Federal/State/tribal/private partnerships have been formed, resulting in over 100 successful projects. Accomplishments through FY 2001 include restoration or protection of approximately 1,385 acres of coastal wetlands, 28 miles of riparian and in-stream habitat, and 99 acres of upland habitat. In addition to protection and restoration activities, the Puget Sound Coastal Program has collected information to help evaluate the status and threats to Puget Sound's fish and wildlife and their habitats and conducted outreach and education to help promote improved stewardship of Washington's coastal resources.

Coastal Uplands

A variety of unique coastal upland habitats; including coastal open grasslands, meadows, dunes and beaches; are being protected or restored. These increasingly threatened coastal areas provide important habitat for species of concern and several federally listed species in the Pacific Northwest; including the western snowy plover, golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*) and Oregon silverspot butterfly.

Partners Combine Strengths

The Puget Sound Coastal Program has joined forces with a number of partners for these upland habitat projects, including The Nature Conservancy, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Parks, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Seattle Pacific University and others. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species Program also coordinates closely on projects.



Oregon silverspot. Photo by Paul Opler

Projects Aboard

Habitat restoration activities were conducted on three coastal golden paintbrush sites. Project activities included trying to reestablish populations of golden paintbrush by planting seedlings, habitat restoration by removal of invasive species, and monitoring the locations and growth of this threatened species.

In a project designed to facilitate reintroduction of the threatened Oregon silverspot butterfly, coastal dune habitat is being restored in the general location of the last sighting of this species in Washington. As part of the restoration activities the early blue violet (*Viola adunca*), the sole larval food during developmental phases of this butterfly species, is being planted.

In cooperation with partners, an interpretive panel was designed and installed at a western snowy plover nesting site that describes the nesting habits of these threatened birds and suggest ways for humans to avoid negatively impacting them. The number of signs delineating nesting areas was also increased to reduce human entry into these areas.

Everything is Connected

The ecosystem-based partnership approach has proven highly effective in expanding existing recovery projects to meet recovery objectives, benefitting species of concern dependent on these systems, leveraging project funds, and implementing solutions across the landscape.

Restoring Coastal Habitats

Approximately 70% of coastal habitats, including intertidal marsh and mudflats and associated upland/riparian buffer areas, have been lost and/or degraded throughout Puget Sound. Salmon and other anadromous fish, migratory waterfowl and shorebirds all depend on the availability of these habitats.

Urban Environment Challenges

The City of Seattle has developed around the Duwamish River estuary. According to the People for Puget Sound newsletter: "Expecting juvenile salmon to survive a trip down the Duwamish River is akin to sending your 13-year-old out on the freeway to find lunch. There's not much to eat, and there's a high risk of mortality." Loss of intertidal habitat in the lower Duwamish has been estimated at 98%. Despite this loss of habitat, a wide variety of fish and wildlife resources, including five species of salmonids, continue to use this system for important life history functions.

Beginning with three pilot restoration projects completed under the Coastal America Program in 1993, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Puget Sound Coastal Program has been working with a diverse group of partners to restore the quality and quantity of coastal wetland habitats in this region. Partners include the Port of Seattle, the Student Conservation Association, People for Puget Sound, local Native American tribes, as well as other Federal and state agencies. Working together, accomplishments of these groups include at least ten projects in this urban estuary.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has also worked to: develop citizen-based stewardship of restoration sites; assisted estuary-scale restoration



Coastal revegetation in the Duwamish River estuary.

planning; and completed monitoring studies to evaluate the effectiveness of restoration efforts. Lessons learned are being applied at restoration sites throughout Puget Sound.

Locals Get Involved

Citizen interest in restoration is increasing. Work by the Student Conservation Association at these sites has involved high school students with emphasis placed on the education opportunities afforded by these urban oases. People for Puget Sound, a non-profit citizen action organization, recently received a grant to develop a program of salmon habitat stewardship that will include Service technical assistance. The Service's Puget Sound Coastal Program staff and its partners are literally changing the face of the Duwamish River estuary as its status evolves from decades of neglect to a urban restoration success story.

Moving Ahead

Building on this model of successful restoration, the Puget Sound Program has also been actively promoting coastal habitat conservation throughout western Washington. Program staff are providing technical and cost-share assistance to partners working to implement on-the-ground restoration projects.

♦ In the small town of Blanchard Washington, a community-based

restoration project will address local concerns regarding flooding, while restoring fish access and nearly 10 acres of tidal slough habitat.

♦ Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, project partners completed a 260-acre restoration project near the mouth of the Skagit River.

♦ The Puget Sound Program is assisting with conservation planning activities at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. This includes evaluating the potential for tidal restoration of portions of a 1,000-acre diked area within the Refuge boundary.

These examples demonstrate our approach to working with others to promote conservation of our coastal resources.

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